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Harwood, Lake Region, Otter Valley and Twinfield Union Schools Inducted into the League of Innovative Schools

MONTPELIER – Harwood Union Middle/High School, Lake Region Union High School, Otter Valley Union High School and Twinfield Union School have been inducted into the League of Innovative Schools, the Agency of Education announced today.

“It’s important for our schools to continuously think about ways to engage students in their learning,” said Secretary of Education Armando Vilaseca. “When kids get excited about what they are learning and see that education is relevant, they take ownership of it - that’s what we want, students who see purpose and feel successful in school.”

Vermont’s League of Innovative Schools is comprised of schools from across the state, and is affiliated with the New England Secondary School Consortium ([NESSC](http://www.nessc.org)). The Consortium includes Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. The goal of the League is to encourage innovative strategies, establish a network of best practices that is directly linked to 21st century learning, and to promote greater educational equity and opportunities for all students. League schools will serve as models for local education agencies around the state, helping to shape the future of Vermont’s public education.

Harwood Union is a strong proponent of student-directed learning. Currently Harwood offers learning opportunities that include on-line and blended learning, dual enrollment, internships and relevant exposure to problem-solving and creative solution building.

“Harwood Union has a tradition of innovative practices that range from student voice and personalization to the integration of technology in education and service learning along with high standards for student performance in academics, the arts and athletics,” said Co-Principal Amy Rex. “We anticipate that the League will improve our capacity to continue this tradition through collaborative networks; that is to interact with other professionals, share our best thinking and resources, problem solve our dilemmas and learn together so that we can provide all students with a world class 21st century education.”

Lake Region Union is in the process of developing a digital portfolio system for students to demonstrate how they have met the identified learning expectations and graduation requirements for post-high school readiness. In addition to portfolio design, the teachers and administration are working on formalizing an internship program and student advisory system which will assist students in creating personalized learning plans and determining future post-secondary plans.

“We are excited to join the League as it immediately allows us to be part of a network of schools who are transforming their practices in efforts to provide educational experiences which are best for students,” said Principal Andre Messier. “Through this network, we will be able to share ideas, initiatives, and gain support and insight from peers across New England.”

Otter Valley Union is developing new flexible pathways programming to complement existing programs designed for student engagement, ownership and post-secondary readiness. Currently, students can participate in the Moosalamoo Center (a wilderness education program), extended learning opportunities, internships, work-based learning opportunities and on-line learning.

“Being a member of the League provides Otter Valley with the opportunity to work collaboratively with schools throughout Vermont and New England,” said Co-Principal Jim Avery. “We share the commitment to focus on the important and challenging work of school transformation.”

Twinfield Union has one of the longest running personalized learning programs in the state. The Renaissance Program provides students with an opportunity to design their own course of studies (including on-line and college classes), internships and travel experiences. Additionally, they are working on developing a proficiency-based grading system for students to demonstrate the acquisition of outlined learning standards through exhibitions and other real world performance criteria.

“We feel that the resources and support the League can offer will be invaluable,” said Principal Mark Mooney. “Especially as we look to move away from the traditional school model toward a proficiency based model that puts student learning at the heart of our entire decision making process.”

There are currently sixteen members in Vermont’s League of Innovative Schools:

[Brattleboro Union High School](#)
[Burlington High School](#)
[Cabot School](#)
[Champlain Valley Union High School](#)
[Essex High School](#)
[Harwood Union Middle/High School](#)
[Lake Region Union High School](#)
[Montpelier High School](#)

[Mount Abraham Union Middle/High School](#)
[Otter Valley Union High School](#)
[Rochester School](#)
[South Burlington High School](#)
[Twinfield Union School](#)
[U-32](#)
[Vergennes Union High School](#)
[Williamstown Middle/High School](#)

For more information about the [League of Innovative Schools](#) and the [New England Secondary Schools Consortium](#) (NESSC), please contact Meg Powden at 802-828-0262 or meg.powden@state.vt.us.

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